

REDUPLICATED EXPRESSIVES IN LEPCHA

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Reduplication is defined as repetition or copying of a word or a syllable either exactly or partially in order to bring modification in the semantic interpretation or to convey some special meaning. As observed in Lepcha, (a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Sikkim and Darjeeling district of West Bengal) reduplicated expressives (structures which represent sounds or senses) may belong to the category of full reduplication as well as partial reduplication. Being an important structural phenomenon of the South Asian languages reduplicated expressives play a vital role in the system of communication and so demands a vivid description of its form and function with reference to the semantic interpretation.

The data of the present paper has been collected from field investigation conducted in Kalimpong subdivision of Darjeeling district of West Bengal.

INTRODUCTON: PRESENT STATUS AND FILIATION OF LEPCHA

The Lepchas are the original inhabitants of Sikkim and are mostly settled in Dzongu valley of north Sikkim. They are also settled in Kalimpong subdivision of Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Apart from Sikkim and West Bengal, Lepcha is also spoken in Bhutan (lower valleys in the West and South) and Nepal (Mechi zone, Ilam district). Lepcha speech community is considered constitutionally a schedule tribe pertaining to the states of West Bengal and Sikkim in India.

According to 2001 census, total Lepcha population in India was 50,629. The population strength of Lepcha in Sikkim is 35, 728 according to 2001 census and 14,721 in West Bengal according to 2001 census. [according to: http://www.census India.gov.in/ Census_Data_2001/ census_Data_online / Language/partb.htm] . Lepchas are also settled in Bhutan (Samasti district)--- the population strength being 2,000(2001 Van Driem) and in Nepal (Ilam district)--- the population strength being 1,272 (1961 Census) [according to : <http://www.ethnologue.com>]

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The Lepcha language (which is also known as Rong/Rongaring/Rongring) belongs to the Tibeto Burman language sub-family under Tibeto-Chinese language family. Lepcha is placed in the non-pronominalised group of the Himalayan languages under the Tibeto-Burman sub-family.

REDUPLICATION AND EXPRESSIVES

Reduplication is defined as “repetition or copying of a word or a syllable either exactly or partially in order to bring modification in the semantic interpretation or to convey some special meaning. The phenomenon is explained in terms of copying followed by affixation (Dattamajumdar 2001:19) There are some reduplicated structures which represent sounds or senses and thus are expressives of a language. The expressives consist of repetition of a word or of a syllable. These expressives have been termed as Onomatopoeia, sound symbolism, ideophones and imitatives by different scholars at different times as all these represent natural sounds and express senses. But as Abbi (1992:15) proposes, “The best solution would be to treat all these forms by their various names under the term Expressives.”

As observed in Lepcha, reduplicated expressives may belong to the category of full reduplication as well as partial reduplication. Fully reduplicated expressives refer to those structures which are formed by exact doubling of the base form without any phonological alteration in the copied affixed part of the structure. On the other hand partially reduplicated expressives refer to those structures which involve alteration in the phonological shape of the affixed copied part of the reduplicated structure.

Being an important structural phenomenon of the South Asian languages reduplicated expressives play a vital role in the system of communication and so demands a vivid description of its form and function with reference to the semantic interpretation.

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2.1. Expressives (Fully Reduplicated)

Lepcha attests a number of fully reduplicated expressives. These may be imitation of natural sounds or may be expressive of senses. The fully reduplicated expressives are both phonologically and semantically significant in the language.

I. Expressives ---- imitative of natural sounds

1. tʃyore	<u>bul bul</u>	tʃunɔn.
tea-seems	imitative	boiling
	sound of	
	boiling	

‘Tea is boiling with the sound.’

2. iŋasɔŋ brok brok ma tyuk
 child-pl. imitative neg. jump
 sound of
 jumping

‘The children should not jump with noise.’

3. nam leŋ fulɛŋsɔŋ bruŋ bruŋ lɔkam.
 young girl boy-pl. imitative
 sound of
 drum beat

‘The young girls and boys are dancing with the loud sound of drum beat.’

4. hɔ̌ yuk hrak hrak majuk.
 you work imitative neg. to do
 of rattling
 sound

‘Do not work with (making) rough sounds.’

5. kut^fun_j unu thaba kram kram hunfyɔ.
corn to fry to eat imitative to be
 sound of
 breaking
 something crispy

‘It is crispy to eat fried corn.’

6. hu suk suk thyopam.
she/he imitative crying
 sound of
 sobbing

'She/he is sobbing.'

II. Expressives (imitative of Senses)

1. TOBOK KIN KIN DOK.

stomach expr. of paining
gripping pain

‘THE STOMACH IS HAVING GRIPING PAIN.’

2. tukya ka nɔm kun kun unnɔn.

pan-loc. oil expr. of to be-pr.
blowing smoke

‘The oil is smoking in the pan.’

3. mennambu ambipɔt klem klem yumba.

ripe mango expr. of seems to be
sweet taste

‘The ripe mango is sweet to taste.’

4. surɔŋ kɯsu sa dɯŋpɔt kyup kyup dokam.

today me-gen. knee expr. of paining
acute pain

‘Today my knee is paining acute.’

5. so zim zim yubam.

rain expr. of falling
drizzling
rain

‘It is drizzling.’

6. tutɕɔt ka tɕholi mu nɔŋ sa nyɔl nyɔl matɕya?

time –loc. school neg. to go of expr. of why
being slow

‘Why are you slow/late, for not going to school?’

The semantic features of the fully reduplicated expressives in Lepcha are as follows.

Degree of Manifestation

Continuation

Repetition

i. Degree of Manifestation

Mostly the fully reduplicated expressives which are the expressives of senses are found to manifest different qualities at different degrees. Some examples are presented below.

1. hʷ thyom thyom lomam
 he expr. of being walking
 slow
 'He is walking slowly.'

2. sukmut dɔr dɔr dyam
 wind expr. of blowing
 blowing in
 puff
 'The wind is blowing in puffs.'

3. ajanre sitet nop nop yumba
 seat-needs how expr. of suppose to be
 softness
 'The seat is supposed to be soft.'

ii. Continuation

Lepcha fully reduplicated expressives which are essentially imitative of some natural sounds of actions often convey the sense of a continuation of a sound. Examples are cited below.

1. than than mat nu mʌ lom.
 imitative to do by neg. walk
 sounds made
 by the heels
 while walking
 'Donot walk by making sounds of heels (continuously).'

2. kʌar fo phur phur mat nu lomnɔn.
 dove bird imitative sound to do by fly-abl.(past)
 of flapping wings
 'The bird has flown flapping the wings (continuously with the sound).'

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3. so mun mun yubam.
rain imitative coming down
sound of
drizzling rain
'It is drizzling (continuously with the sound).'

iii. Repetition

Lepcha fully reduplicated expressives may convey the sense of repeated action. Some examples are given below.

1. myɔnbu ariŋ bella bella yet
unknown word expr. of to ask
repetition

'Ask the unknown words repeatedly.'

2. thal thal thom ka mu nun.
expr. of town to neg. go
again and again

'Do not go to the town repeatedly.'

3. saarkʌp bruk bruk matnɔ tyukkam
goat-child expr. of to do jumping
repeated
up and down

'The goat-child is (repeatedly) jumping up and down.'

EXPRESSIVES (PARTIALLY REDUPLICATED)

Partially reduplicated expressives which involve a partial phonological alteration in the copied part affixed to the base element is prevalent in Lepcha. Alteration of a vowel or a consonant in the suffixed copied part have been observed in case of the partially reduplicated structures in Lepcha. Such partially reduplicated expressives are exemplified below.

1. yuk dul dal mʌ mat
work expr. of being neg. do
jumble
'Do not jumble up (confuse) while working.'

- 1
2 2. fʌŋ fiŋ taklyan.
3 expr. of sky
4 cleanliness
5 ‘The sky is clear.’
6
7 3. bruk brak so yunon
8 expr. of falling rain falling
9 in drops
10 ‘The rain is falling in drops.’
11
12 4. tukfil nʌ yɔɔp nʌ tʃul tʃal hunbam.
13 ant by sting from expr. of happening
14 prickling
15 ‘Stinging of the ant is causing prickling sensation.’
16
17 5. hɔ yap yop matnɔ mʌ lom.
18 you expr.of to do neg. walk
19 staggering
20 ‘You shouldnot stagger while walking.’
21
22 6. hɔ nɔŋ nʌ li hala vala hunnɔn.
23 you go after house expr.of to be-abl.(past)
24 emptiness
25 ‘After your departure the house became empty.’
26

27 **SEMANTIC INTERPRETATION**

28
29 The partially reduplicated expressives are found to be employed in order
30 to convey different degrees of feeling and repeated actions. Thus it is the
31 ‘Degree of Manifestation’ and ‘Repetition’ which covers the semantic
32 interpretation of the partially reduplicated expressives in Lepcha.
33

34 **REDUPLICATION IN JUXTAPOSITION**

35
36 Additionally a different structure of reduplicated expressive has been
37 noticed in which two fully reduplicated expressives are used together in
38 juxtaposition. An instance can be cited below.
39

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l.surɔŋsa thupe ka iŋasɔŋ wur wur tin tin hunnɔn.
today-gen. occasion on child-pl. expr.of hurry/ to be
 scurry

'Children are excited (in hurry/scurry) for today's occasion/ function.'

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